



Leap Years

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(CEFR A2-B1)

Age: 12 - 15

45 – 50 Minutes

February 2012

Starting off

Discuss the following in groups.

1. How old are you? What year were you born in? Do you know what day of the week you were born? When is your birthday?
2. How old are the people in your family? Can you remember when their birthdays are?
3. How do you and your friends and family usually celebrate your birthdays?

Vocabulary 1

These words are in the article you are going to read. First, match them to their definitions.

everyone

occur

orbit

accurate

approximately

previous

to travel through space, in a circle round the earth or sun

all people

happen

the one before

correct

used with numbers to mean 'about' or 'around'



Vocabulary 2

Now use the words above to complete these sentences.

1. It takes 24 hours for the moon to _____ the earth.
2. I'm not sure, but I think it costs _____ £100 for a new passport.
3. Most car accidents _____ at night.
4. Our _____ teacher was a woman, but the new one is a man.
5. Sorry, I don't know the right time because this cheap watch is not _____.
6. _____ needs food, water and air to stay alive.

Before you read

Discuss in pairs. What is special about the date **the 29th of February?**

First Reading

Read the text quickly to check your ideas.

Second Reading

Read the text again and answer the questions below.

- 1) 2012 is a leap year. When is the next leap year?
- 2) Why do we have leap years?
- 3) In which country were leap years invented?
- 4) When do people born on the 29th of February celebrate their birthdays?



Language Work

1. The text contains lots of days and dates. Use it to help you fill the gaps. Choose either in or on:

- 1) _____ February the 29th
- 2) _____ the 29th of February
- 3) _____ 29.02.96
- 4) _____ February
- 5) _____ a leap year
- 6) _____ 2012
- 7) _____ February

2. Complete the rules with either in or on:

- 1) We use _____ with days
- 2) We use _____ with months
- 3) We use _____ with years
- 4) We use _____ with dates

Speaking

Work in groups. Discuss the following questions:

1. Would you like to be born on the 29th of February? Can you think of advantages and disadvantages?
2. If you could have your birthday on any date, which would you choose and why?
3. Imagine an ideal birthday. How would you celebrate? Think about the following:

Who would you celebrate with? Where? What would you do? What gifts would you like to receive? What food would you eat? What would you wear?

Tell your group about your ideal birthday. Remember to use would because you are imagining e.g.

For my ideal birthday I would celebrate with my three best friends. We would go to watch Poland play football, then eat three cheese-burgers each at McDonalds. Then we would...



Extra Activity

On a piece of paper write 5 dates that are important for you and/or in your country. Work in pairs (A & B). Look at the dates your partner has written and try to guess why they are important e.g.

A: Is the third of March your birthday?

B: No, on the third of March I'm going to visit my cousin. I'm looking forward to it.

**FEB
29**

Leap Years

**FEB
29**

Everyone knows that there are 365 days in a year, right? Well, usually yes, but this year is special because in 2012, there are 366 days. These special years are called leap years.

Leap years occur every four years. In a Leap year, an extra day is added to the calendar. This extra day is called Leap Day and is always in February, on the 29th.

Adding an extra day helps to keep our calendars working properly. The earth takes slightly more than 365 days to orbit the sun, so to keep calendars accurate, an extra day must be added every four years. Thousands of years ago, it was the Egyptians who invented the leap year. Then hundreds of years later, the Romans decided that the extra day would be on February the 29th.

Approximately 4 million people celebrate their birthdays on February the 29th. The chances of being born on this special day are about 1 in 1500. When it is not a Leap year, people born on February the 29th can choose when their birthday is. Some people choose the previous day, and some people choose the day after.

The year 1996 was a leap year so if you were born on 29.02.96 you will be 16 years old this year, but only 4 leap years old!